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## Japan

### Market Development Reports

### Japan Food Trends October

**2008**

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**Report Highlights:**

"Veggie meetings" and the "5Ks" for professional women are trends that marketers should know about Japan. Also in this month's Japan Food Trends we reveal seafood consumption survey results.

Note: Japan Food Trends (JFT) communicates Japanese food and lifestyle trends that may help U.S. exporters to generate product and marketing ideas.

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## Editor's Notes

Trends are abundant in Japan. "Healthy veggie meetings" are in the news, which I have yet to experience, but will try in an ATO Japan meeting. An article about the 5 "Ks" women want may offer the ingredients to marketing and maybe winning a woman's heart. Another food trend involves men in the kitchen.

### Market Trends

*Veggie meetings* Nikkei MJ, September 19, 2008, p20

Apparently, if you've worked in Europe you may have experienced a veggie meeting. Y'know those meetings where you eat fresh vegetables instead of snacks, and drink vegetable juice instead of coffee. According to the journalist, veggie meetings have taken place in the United States. Well, veggie meetings may become fashionable here in Japan. Of course, the alleged instigators are vegetable juice producers taking advantage of a great opportunity and market trend, which were introduced in past JFT newsletters. The first is the greater health consciousness throughout all age groups. The second is the fight against metabolic syndrome. The third trend is the big vegetable juice consumption boom. According to a



research company that has introduced veggie meetings, the sugar related nutrients and the chewing motion – assuming the staff can hear while crunching on carrots and celery -- help meeting participants to concentrate and increase productivity. It is also a method to get younger employees who usually lack vegetable consumption to eat vegetables regularly. Leading companies have incorporated veggie meetings into their repertoire and the article suggests that universities may also introduce this practice for staff and student meetings.

Nikkei MJ

(Photo: Young beverage company team consume vegetable juice)

*Seafood consumption trends* Nikkei MJ, Sept. 10, 2008 p2

Nikkei MJ does many surveys like this one on seafood consumption in Japan. 1,030 men and women between the ages of 20 and 70 were asked questions about their seafood eating trends. 27% said they ate more fish this year than last, which may point to another trend of healthy eating. 56.8% were unchanged and 15% ate less. Asked about their image of fish menus 82.7% answered "healthy" and 72.1% replied "tastes delicious". If true, this could reverse the trend away from fish consumption and toward meat and dairy consumption that we have seen in recent years. One tip for marketers: make the fish easy to prepare as many consumers claim to be turned off by the effort they believe is required to prepare fish. The survey also indicated higher consumption of vegetable and tofu menus.

*5K foods for professional women* Nikkei MJ, September 22, 2008, p4

The Editor-in-chief of Nikkei Woman was dumbfounded to learn that there are an increasing number of women who say poor eating habits are one reason women switch jobs. Women who stay at the office for long hours purchase ready-made boxed dinners (bento) on their

way back home. These aren't the most nutritious meals to eat everyday. These same women finally eat dinner some time after 10pm everyday.

A survey of 1,403 professional women who responded to questions about their eating patterns was conducted. 67.7% said they didn't eat enough vegetables. 55.7% answered that their overall nutritional intake was unbalanced.

At the end of the article, you find out that it is a promotional piece for yogurt, which is great. But more to the point is the reason why 47.1% of those who responded to the survey said they eat yogurt for breakfast. According to the editor-in-chief, there are five important factors that influence women's eating pattern and they all begin with the letter "K".

#1 Kenko (Health)

#2 Kakaku (Price)

#3 Kinosei (Functionality=health benefit)

#4 Kirei (Beauty)

#5 Kokoro (Free from guilt)

Here is an example for #5:

A woman is pondering over a dinner menu "I know this menu would taste fantastic, but I also know there are a lot of calories. I would feel guilty eating it." An alternative low calorie menu would sooth the woman's heart (=kokoro)

### **Community Trends**

*Sweets-cooking men* Nihon Keizai Shinbun, September 20, 2008 p18

Some fathers get a kick out of bringing home a strawberry shortcake and watching their daughter take a big bite out of her piece of the shortcake and smile. Some fathers are taking cooking classes so they can have a bigger role in this sweet moment.



More and more men are learning to cook, so learning to make sweets and cakes seems to be a natural progression. One cooking school offers a class just for men who enjoy taking their sweets home to watch their family devour them. They share their cooking experience with their children at home, which gives them more opportunities to interact with family.

The photograph shows men learning how to make cakes and other sweets.

(Misaling Factory website)

*Supermarket service for the elderly* Nihon Keizai Shinbun, September 20, 2008, p15

Supermarkets are training their employees to provide services to elderly customers. Customers are growing older and supermarkets are getting ready to offer the best care-fit service by offering employees training at the NPO Nippon Care-fit Service Association. This certified training program teaches techniques such as wheelchair operation and walking assistance, and many other techniques to help the elderly live a fuller lifestyle.

Supermarkets are important trendsetters in Japan. They continuously look for ways to keep them attractive for consumers to visit their stores. Another example of their search for satisfying their consumers was reported in JFT July 2008. A supermarket chain was

searching for a way to install battery recharging stations in their parking lot for future increases of electric cars.

If you are interested in care-fit, please visit the Nippon Care-fit Association's English website. At present, the website features the Association's visit with Governor Huntsman of Utah.

[http://www.carefit.org/english/index\\_e.html](http://www.carefit.org/english/index_e.html)



(Utah Governor Huntsman and Nippon Care-fit Service Association  
From Nippon Care-fit Service Association website)

### **IT Trend**

*GPS mobile phones* Nihon Keizai Shinbun, September 21, 2008, p1

Nippon Telephone & Telegraph will begin a new GPS mobile phone service that will provide the phone owner with restaurant and entertainment information that is automatically generated based on the location of the mobile phone.

As I am writing, I'm thinking about my first drink after work. If I were to use this GPS mobile phone system and searched the word "whiskey" on my mobile phone it would send me restaurant and bar locations closest to my office desk. Taking this a step further, I suppose someone could figure out which bar I went to by tracking me through my GPS.